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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

Vegetation der Erde

XIII. NORTH AMERICA

It is unfortunate that ENGLER and DRUDE should have decided to devote but one volume of the *Vegetation der Erde* to North America. Such a decision seems out of harmony with the rest of the work. It might have been expected that a work published in Europe would devote separate volumes to such relatively limited areas as the Carpathians, the Caucasus, the Balkan countries, and the North German heath. However, a somewhat comparable plan has been followed with regard to Africa, three volumes having already been issued, with more promised. Even in South America, a volume has been devoted to Chile and another to the Peruvian Andes. With such a plan, it is a fundamental mistake to devote but one volume to North America.[1] HARSHBERGER prepared himself as well as he could for the impossible task he was asked to undertake by years of study and by trips to all the more important phytogeographical areas of North America except Central America and the arctic region. Under the circumstances, the volume is one with which the author may be fairly well satisfied. It is a veritable mine of information, in which there may be found the chief results of the phytogeographic work accomplished upon our continent. There are many errors of detail throughout the volume, errors both of omission and of commission, and some are rather serious. To many, and especially to taxonomic specialists of local areas, these errors will loom large. To those of broader viewpoint, however, the numerous errors will be subordinate to the relatively successful completion of one of the most stupendous tasks ever undertaken by a single botanist. HARSHBERGER deserves and will receive the gratitude of all future plant geographers in our country, for he has vastly lightened their labors. They will value this work because of its helpfulness as a guide to literature, and because of its broad comparisons and generalizations; it will be for them an easy matter to correct the errors of determination or of synonymy and the mistakes in spelling that seem such grevious matters to some of the reviewers. This volume is the first of the series to appear in a tongue other than the German. It is a pleasure to congratulate ENGLER and DRUDE for their broad-minded conception in this matter, thus adopting a plan which ENGLER had previously adopted in the *Pflanzenreich.*

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[1] ENGLER, A., and DRUDE, O., Die Vegetation der Erde. XIII. HARSHBERGER, J. W., Phytogeographic survey of North America. pp. lxiii+790. *map. pls. 18. figs. 32.* Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann (also G. E. Stechert & Co. New York). 1911. *M.* 52 (subscription price *M.* 40).

Following the preface is a German summary of the contents of the volume by DRUDE. Part I gives a survey of floristic and phytogeographic work in North America, and also a most useful bibliography. Part II contains an account of the geography and climate of the continent, together with some plant statistics. Part III has to do with the geologic evolution of the North American flora from the Cretaceous to the present. Here there are discussed the sudden appearance of Cretaceous angiosperms, and the influence of Pleistocene glaciation in the destruction of species and in the production of relict endemism. A detailed account is given of the postglacial history of our flora. To the north there has been a succession of forest types, culminating in the dicotyl forests which now generally dominate. Interesting accounts are given of recent changes in the vegetation of the coastal plain. HARSHBERGER aligns himself with those who regard the prairies as sufficiently explained by taking account of historical factors. This part closes with a description of the affinities of the North American flora and a list of phytogeographic classifications pertaining to North America.

Part IV, which comprises more than half of the volume, presents in some detail the phytogeographic regions of North America, and is accompanied by a colored map which makes it easy to follow the text. There are seven chapters, dividing the continent into as many "zones": (1) The arctic and subarctic zones; the latter is subdivided into the Labrador, Hudson Bay-Keewatin, Mackenzie, and Alaska districts. (2) The North American temperate zone, Atlantic section; subdivided into the St. Lawrence–Great Lake, Atlantic–Gulf Coast, and Piedmont-Appalachian-Ozark regions. Among the districts most fully treated are New Brunswick (based largely on GANONG'S studies), the New England mountains, the Adirondacks, the New Jersey pine barrens, the coastal formations, and the various forest districts. (3) The North American temperate zone, interior xerophytic sections; subdivided into the prairie, Rocky Mountain, and Great Basin regions. (4) The North American temperate zone, Pacific section; subdivided into the Sitkan, Columbian, and Californian regions. (5) The Mexican subtropic zone and mountain regions. (6) The North American tropic zone, Mexican and Central American section. (7) The North American tropic zone, West Indian section. The illustrations are good, but are much too few to depict properly the vegetation of a continent.—HENRY C. COWLES.

NOTES FOR STUDENTS

Cecidology.—The similarity of plant galls and animal tumors is attracting the attention of workers in various parts of the world. SAUL[2] has issued a preliminary paper in which he expresses the opinion that some of the various

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[2] SAUL, E., Beziehungen der Acari zur Geschwulstatiologie. Centrabl. f. Bakt., Paras., und Infekt. **59**:400–406. 1911.